

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

IO-13 /074 W

-----060988 170655Z /13

P R 170616Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2498

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KUALA LUMPUR 1460

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PGOV, MY

SUBJECT: KELANTAN STATE ELECTIONS

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 1299 DTG 130930Z FEB 78

1. FURTHER TO REFTTEL, REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIAN ELECTION COMMISSION ANNOUNCED FEBRUARY 14 THAT ELECTIONS FOR THE 36-SEAT KELANTAN STATE ASSEMBLY WOULD BE HELD SATURDAY, MARCH 11, WITH NOMINATION DATE BEING SET FOR FEBRUARY 23. PRIOR TO DISSOLUTION OF STATE ASSEMBLY FEB 13, PARTY BREAKDOWN OF SEATS WAS AS FOLLOWS: ISLAMIC PARTY (PAS OR PMIP) - 20; UNITED MALAYSIA NATIONAL PARTY (UMNO) - 13; BERJASA (NEWLY FORMED PARTY HEADED BY PAS EXPELLEE, CHIEF MINISTER DATUK HAJI MOHAMED NASIR) - 2; AND MALAYSIAN CHINESE ASSOCIATION (MCA) - 1. UNTIL ELECTIONS ARE HELD, DATUK MOHD. NASIR WILL HEAD CARETAKER STATE GOVERNMENT.

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2. NEWLY-APPOINTED NATIONAL FRONT (NF) CHAIRMAN FOR KELANTAN, FINANCE MINISTER TENGKU RAZALEIGH HAMZAH, REPORTEDLY HAS DECLARED THAT THE NF OBJECTIVE IN THE KELANTAN ELECTION IS TO "DESTROY" PAS. NEGOTIATIONS REPORTEDLY ARE UNDERWAY BETWEEN NF AND BERJASA TO ARRIVE AT FORMULA FOR ALLOCATING SEATS OR SOME OTHER ELECTORAL UNDERSTANDING.

3. COMMENT: LOCAL OBSERVERS GENERALLY AGREE NF GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO RISK ELECTIONS FIRST IN KELANTAN AS MEANS OF "TESTING THE WATERS" BEFORE DECIDING ON TIME FRAME FOR HOLDING NATIONAL ELECTIONS. A BIG WIN FOR THE NF AND BERJASA MARCH 11 (I.E., GAINING CONTROL OF THE STATE ASSEMBLY) WOULD LEND ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE IDEA OF EARLY ELECTIONS, PERHAPS IN APRIL OR MAY, TO CAPITALIZE ON THE "BANDWAGON EFFECT." IF, HOWEVER, PAS WINS A MAJORITY OF THE SEATS, THERE WOULD BE CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT TO HOLD A DECISION ON GENERAL ELECTION TIMING IN ABEYANCE UNTIL OTHER FACTORS CAN BE CAREFULLY WEIGHTED.

4. ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS AND COMMENT ON THIS IMPORTANT STATE ELECTION WILL FOLLOW RETURN OF EMBOFFS CURRENTLY TRAVELLING OUTSIDE KUALA LUMPUR.
MILLER

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NNN

Message Attributes

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